

we see that excellence every day in so many ways, here, from the pilots and everyone on the flight deck to the boiler technicians, from the mess cooks to the storekeepers, to the officers on the bridge. It takes every single one of you, working together as a team, to keep this ship on the flight line, to land some of the best aircraft in the world on what looks to their pilots like a postage stamp in the sea.

Your teamwork has notched record after record, including the mark among active ships for arrested landings, 343,000 of them. Congratulations. As someone said to me as the helicopter was setting down, that's a lot of nonskid. [Laughter]

As the oldest ship in the Navy, you do fly this remarkable ensign behind me that says, "Don't Tread On Me." And as was said earlier in the introduction by the Admiral, this week, this very week is the 221st anniversary of the Revolutionary War battles of Lexington and Concord, the first in America's long struggle for independence. I hope you will think about that, each and every one of you, this week. I hope you will imagine what it might have been like so many years ago, over 200 years ago, for those young people embarking on their struggle, risking their lives for what was then nothing more than a dream.

Now, more than 200 years later, you represent in your uniforms the oldest democracy in human history. Thanks to you and those who came before you, your skill and professionalism, not only does the oldest fighting ship in the Fleet inspire the same respect as we have for our early patriots but thanks to you and the people who came before you, we are still here.

As you keep it that way, on freedom's flagship, remember that 221 years of people like you have made America what it is today and make possible this remarkable partnership we celebrate with the Japanese and make possible the guarantee of freedom for your children and your grandchildren and people throughout the world. I thank you for that.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to the families of the 7th Fleet for their support. Our military families bear such a heavy burden of America's leadership, especially those stationed at Yokosuka and other bases

so far from home; those who have to cope with the extra strain of long periods when ships are at sea, when one parent has to carry the full load to run a household and raise the children. We ask so much of our families, but again and again, they deliver. Our Nation is grateful to you, as well, for our security depends upon you, as well.

To the men and women of the 7th Fleet, you must know that you represent the very best of America. Over and over again, you have proved your excellence. Thanks to you, the world knows now that the United States will stand firm in Asia. Thanks to you, we can make this new Security Declaration with Japan. And everybody knows that we mean it and that we can mean it. We can stand firm for peace and security, for democracy and freedom, for a good and decent future for the children of this region and the children of the United States, thanks to you.

Our Nation is in your debt now and forever. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:35 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Rear Adm. James Ellis, USN, Commander, Carrier Group 5; Lt. Gen. Richard Myers, USAF, Commander, U.S. Forces Japan; Vice Adm. Archie Clemens, USN, Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet; Maj. Gen. Waldo Freeman, USA, Commanding General, U.S. Army Japan; Rear Adm. Byron Tobin, USN, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan; Capt. David Polatty, Commanding Officer, and MMCM Ashley Dwiggin, Command Master Chief, U.S.S. *Independence*; and Joan Mondale, wife of Ambassador Walter Mondale. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 6885—National Volunteer Week, 1996

April 17, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The history of America is a history of volunteerism. Our people have always worked together to resolve concerns, to fight injustice, to rebuild communities, and to comfort those in need. And though some regard today's society with cynicism and doubt, we need only look to the more than 89.2 million

volunteers who work tirelessly throughout the year to see that we are still a people who care for one another and who daily seek positive change by reaching out to others.

We owe a great debt to the many volunteers who work to stem the tides of poverty, hunger, homelessness, crime, and abuse. Examples of unsung heroes exist in every neighborhood—a mother starts an after-school program in her garage to tutor young people in a crime-ridden area; a group of teenagers takes youngsters from a local shelter to the movies or a cultural event a few times a month; an elderly man looks after his neighbor's children so that she can run errands; a family makes regular visits to seniors at a local home. Citizens from all walks of life are working together to claim our Nation's challenges as their own, building bridges among people and setting a powerful example of leadership and compassion.

This week and throughout the year, let us salute all those who devote their time, their talents, and sometimes even their lives to the betterment of our communities. And let us recognize organizations like the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Points of Light Foundation that foster the spirit of service across America. In partnership with government, schools, and religious communities, these caring individuals and groups are expanding and encouraging the great American legacy of volunteerism.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 21 through April 27, 1996, as National Volunteer Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to express appreciation for volunteers and to encourage volunteer activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:42 a.m., April 18, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 19.

**Executive Order 12999—
Educational Technology: Ensuring
Opportunity for All Children in the
Next Century**

April 17, 1996

In order to ensure that American children have the skills they need to succeed in the information-intensive 21st century, the Federal Government is committed to working with the private sector to promote four major developments in American education: making modern computer technology an integral part of every classroom; providing teachers with the professional development they need to use new technologies effectively; connecting classrooms to the National Information Infrastructure; and encouraging the creation of excellent educational software. This Executive order streamlines the transfer of excess and surplus Federal computer equipment to our Nation's classrooms and encourages Federal employees to volunteer their time and expertise to assist teachers and to connect classrooms.

Accordingly, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the provisions of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980, as amended (15 U.S.C. 3701 *et seq.*), the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, ch. 288, 63 Stat. 377, and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1996, Public Law 104–106, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Protection of Educationally Useful Federal Equipment. (a) Educationally useful Federal equipment is a vital national resource. To the extent such equipment can be used as is, separated into parts for other computers, or upgraded—either by professional technicians, students, or other recycling efforts—educationally useful Federal equipment is a valuable tool for computer education. Therefore, to the extent possible, all executive departments and agencies (hereinafter referred to as “agencies”) shall protect and safeguard such equipment, par-